

SHOCK AND HORROR OF DIPLOMATS, S. AFRICANS

PRETORIA REPORTER

THE news of President Kennedy's assassination came as a great shock to South Africans of all races and caused deep shock and horror among members of the Diplomatic Corps in Pretoria last night.

Friday is a traditional dinner party night in Pretoria, but all occasions broke up abruptly as the news spread.

Heads of diplomatic missions immediately phoned the American Embassy to express their sense of shock and sympathy.

The American Ambassador, Mr. Joseph C. Satterthwaite, was informed of the President's killing while he was entertaining guests at a dinner party at the Embassy.

In a statement issued just an hour after the news of the President's death reached Pretoria the Ambassador said:

'PROFOUND GRIEF'

"On behalf of the Embassy and our Consulates and of all Americans in South Africa I can only express our profound grief at the tragic loss of President Kennedy."

In the Embassy offices in central Pretoria a group of officials with drawn faces listened to the Voice of America as the details of the assassination were unfolded by a sombre-voiced announcer.

The British Ambassador, Sir Hugh Stephenson, and the Dutch Ambassador, Mr. H. A. Helb, heard news during the interval at the opening performance of the "Swan Lake" ballet at the Aula in Pretoria.

ON CAR RADIO

The news was broken to them by a South African Cabinet Minister's chauffeur who heard it on the radio of his official car parked outside the theatre.

Sir Hugh and Mr. Helb immediately phoned the United States Ambassador to express their sympathy.

At the end of the ballet performance Professor C. H. Rautenbach, Rector of Pretoria University, asked the audience to stand in silent tribute.

'HORRIBLE MURDER'

The Italian Ambassador, Mr. Aslattati, said: "I went immediately to see the American Ambassador to convey the deepest sorrow of my Government, my people and myself."

"I am terribly shocked by this murder. It is horrible."

A spokesman for the State President, Mr. Swart, said he had been informed of the assassination and was deeply shocked. He will issue a statement this morning.

Mr. Swart was entertaining his personal staff at an annual dinner before he and Mrs. Swart

leave for their Free State farm next week. SAPA conveyed the news to them as they were taking leave of their guests.

The South African Foreign Minister, Mr. Louw, said that the tragedy was a shock to him.

NECESSARY STEPS

He said he could not comment further, but added that the necessary steps were being taken to convey South Africa's sympathy to the United States.

A representative of the Indian community in Pretoria telephoned the American Ambassador to convey the deep sense of shock and personal loss which they felt at the news.

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