

JOHNSON PLEDGES FACTS IN KILLINGS

Orders Full Investigation—
Texas Plans Inquiry

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 25—

The Government moved tonight to give the public all the facts on President Kennedy's assassination and the slaying of the man accused as the assassin.

The White House announced a broad inquiry into the events of the last few days. The announcement said: "The people of the nation may be sure that all of the facts will be made public."

President Johnson, the statement said, ordered the Justice Department "to conduct a prompt and thorough investigation of all the circumstances surrounding the brutal assassination of President Kennedy and the murder of his alleged assassin."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, which is the Justice Department's investigating arm, will do the field work. The statement said the President had "directed all Federal agencies to cooperate."

The move was clearly designed to end any doubts in this country or abroad about the identity of the assassin and to try to make amends for the tragic mishandling of the suspect, Lee Harvey Oswald.

There was also some feeling that President Johnson preferred to have the inquiry and public presentation of the facts handled by Federal authorities rather than state and local officials in Texas.

State to Convene Inquiry

Earlier today the Texas Attorney General, Waggoner Carr, announced that the state would convene a special court of inquiry to investigate the two killings and make the results public.

The Justice Department reacted to that by saying it would cooperate with "any responsible inquiry." But a spokesman made clear at the time that the Texas inquiry could not supersede the department's own effort to get to the bottom of the tragedy.

Representative Hale Boggs of Louisiana, assistant Democratic leader in the House, suggested today that a Congressional commission make a formal inquiry into the assassination. He said this was necessary because the facts could not be brought out in the trial of Oswald's accused slayer, Jack Ruby.

The preliminary opinion in the

Government is that no Presidential commission or other special body is needed. But there is a determination to bring the facts out by some device whose impartiality cannot be challenged.

One problem in an inquiry's bringing out the facts is that Ruby presumably faces a trial for murder. It would be in violation of legal ethics and the minimum standards of fair procedure for any official to make public an asserted account of his activities before he is tried.

The Texas Attorney General called a press conference here this afternoon to announce the court of inquiry. In a statement read to reporters at the Statler-Hilton Hotel, he said:

"All Texans join with all other Americans in mourning the loss of our President.

Wants Facts Disclosed

"Because the shocking assassination of President Kennedy, the attempted assassination of Governor Connally and the subsequent murder of the suspected assassin occurred in Texas, it is my feeling that all facts surrounding these matters should be made public for the knowledge of all people everywhere.

"I will, therefore, upon my return to Texas, call for a court of inquiry, which is authorized under existing Texas law. Those conducting the inquiry will be the top staff of my office, including the Attorney General, working in cooperation with one or more outstanding jurists and lawyers.

"Also, top-level local and state authorities will be invited to participate actively, and Federal authorities will be asked to cooperate.

"A full and complete report of the findings of this hearing will be sent to the United States Department of Justice, and I want to emphasize that this will be a thorough, complete and impartial investigation, and that the full results will be made public."

It was explained later that a court of inquiry has all the powers of a court of law to obtain evidence and command testimony, but that it has no punitive power. Its principal value is in bringing the facts in a situation to public attention. Public authorities can then bring such legal action as the disclosures warrant.

Texas last employed this device in exploring the financial manipulations of Billie Sol Estes.

The court of inquiry also has the effect of moving the President's assassination and Oswald's slaying out of the exclusive jurisdiction of Dallas authorities.

Attorney General Carr said he had spoken briefly with President Johnson today but that he had not discussed the court of inquiry with him.