

ASSASSINATION INQUIRY COULD LAST FOR YEAR

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 11 (AP)—Some officials predicted privately today that it may be a year before Chief Justice Earl Warren's commission finishes investigating the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The predictions followed disclosures by government sources that threads from the shirt of Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused assassin, were found snagged on the rifle that authorities say was used to kill Mr. Kennedy as he rode in a motorcade in Dallas Nov. 22.

The government sources reported also yesterday that Oswald's palm print was found on the rifle. They said that some latent fingerprints—identified as Oswald's—were lifted by Federal Bureau of Investigation technicians from wrapping paper that hid the rifle when it was carried into the Texas School Book Depository building where Oswald worked.

'Doesn't Cut Corners'

As the Warren commission continued its study of a five-volume FBI report on the assassination, a friend of the Chief Justice predicted that the commission's work would not be completed for "a good many months at least. Warren moves with all deliberate speed, but he doesn't cut a single corner."

Another official said that it would not bother the White House if the commission takes a year, declaring: "Nobody wants a quickie job. President (Lyndon B.) Johnson made that clear in creating the commission."

There was evidence from Warren himself that the commission considers the FBI investigation report, delivered to the seven commission members Monday night, just the starting point for its task.

Within 24 hours Warren announced the appointment of a general counsel, former Solicitor General J. Lee Rankin, as the first step in providing the commission with a staff.

Earlier, he disclosed that the

commission has discussed plans to establish offices, but told reporters that this must wait until the group had studied the FBI report; until then, he said, the commission could have "no idea of the magnitude of its task."

Evaluation a Big Job

Simply evaluating the FBI report appeared likely to be a big job. When this and other information has been evaluated, the commission is empowered to

conduct any further investigation it deems desirable."

The FBI report, moreover, is itself not complete. Officials said that supplemental reports would be sent to Warren "from time to time" as teams of agents still at work check out leads and information.

The report as it reached Warren was known to indicate that Oswald, 24 years old, committed the assassination without accomplices, and that Oswald had no connection with Jack Ruby, 52, the Dallas nightclub owner who killed Oswald two days later.

Ruby's deed inspired countless rumors and suspicions of collusion, conspiracy, and even foreign intrigue. Some commission members have declared that they will not consider their work done until all such doubts have been resolved to the satisfaction of reasonable men.

There is no exact precedent for the Warren Commission or its assignment, although former Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts headed the five-member commission that investigated the Pearl Harbor disaster of Dec. 7, 1941.

That commission, named by President Franklin D. Roosevelt 11 days after the Japanese assault, filed its report in January 1942. But that did not close the matter; there were seven more official investigations, and the final report—made by a special joint committee of Congress that labored for 10 months—came in July 1946, or about 4½ years after the disaster.