

Johnson Quickly Grasps US Reins

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Washington, D. C. — In a gray pall of rain, the timeless White House saw solemn ceremonies for the assassinated President Kennedy and the first actions of the new President Johnson to collect the reins of government.

The course for the 13½ months of the Johnson administration will be set in a speech the president will deliver to a joint session of congress at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday.

The joint meeting was arranged at Mr. Johnson's request, a high administration source said. It will be preceded Tuesday by a series of meetings with foreign leaders who are coming to Washington for President Kennedy's funeral Monday.

While leaders of all branches of the government filed past the body of the murdered president resting in a closed casket in the large east room of the White House, his successor was already at work in a second floor office in the executive office building across a street from the White House.

Mr. Johnson, clad in black and showing the strain of the harrowing Friday on which a sniper in his home state cut down President Kennedy, was joined by former President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Mrs. Johnson when he

viewed his predecessor's casket in the East room.

Soon thereafter, the new president issued a proclamation designating Monday, the day of President Kennedy's state funeral here, as "a national day of mourning." He urged all Americans to "assemble on that day at their respective places of divine worship there to bow down in submission to the will of Almighty God and pay their homage of love and rever-

ence to the memory of a great and good man."

Then, in his first executive order, Mr. Johnson directed that all federal offices in Washington and throughout the nation be closed on Monday.

Much of the new president's first full day in office was necessarily given to the continuing problems of government. It included a half-hour cabinet meeting at which he asked and received pledges of support from the department heads picked by his predecessor; similar pledges received by telephone from leaders of business and labor; separate 40 minute meetings with Secretary of State Rusk and Secretary of Defense McNamara, a short meeting with the bipartisan

leadership of congress, private lunch with Gen. Eisenhower, a meeting with former President Truman and his first intelligence briefing as president.

Mr. Johnson also found time to go with Mrs. Johnson to a 10 minute private service at noon in St. John's Episcopal church, the 145 year old federal style "church of the presidents" across Lafayette square from the White House.

Lights were on before day-break in Mr. Johnson's stone house in the Spring Valley section of Washington. He left the house at 8:45 a.m. with five motorcycle police escorting his official limousine and was at the White House a quarter hour later.

The new president's first call was at the oval office of his predecessor, where attendants had already begun the process of packing Mr. Kennedy's collection of marine paintings and models. White House News Secretary Pierre Salinger said Mr. Johnson talked there for a few minutes with Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy, the late president's brother. The subject of their talk was not disclosed.

McGeorge Bundy, Mr. Kennedy's special assistant for national security affairs, then escorted Mr. Johnson to the top secret "situation room" in the White House basement.

At 9:28 a.m., the swarm of newsmen who have descended on the office wing of the White House spied Mr. Johnson, apparently oblivious to the rain, sauntering across W. Executive av. to the massive old executive office building. In the group with him was Representative Homer Thornberry (Dem., Tex.), an old friend, who had been nominated by Mr. Kennedy for a federal judgeship.