

Connally Denies Kennedy Went To Texas to Help Out Johnson

By EDITH EVANS ASBURY

President Kennedy's final, tragic trip to Texas was made because he wished to make it, not to please Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson or Gov. John B. Connally, Jr., of Texas, the Governor asserts in an article to be published next week.

The Governor also declares that the purpose of the trip was not, as has previously been reported to patch up a feud between Mr. Johnson and Senator Ralph W. Yarborough, Democrat of Texas.

President Kennedy's "two distinct purposes" in going to Texas four years ago this week were to raise funds and "to improve his own political position in a state that promised to be critical in the election of 1964," Governor Connally writes in the Nov. 24 issue of Life magazine.

The Texas Governor writes that he was under pressure from Washington for a year and a half to arrange the Kennedy visit. Texas, a key state because of Mr. Johnson's place on the ticket, had contributed very little to the party's national committee, which was \$4-million in debt, the Governor recalls.

Kennedy Was 'Galled'

In addition to seeking funds, the President wanted to see and talk to Texas conservatives who opposed him, writes the Governor, who was riding in the car with the President when he was killed and was himself wounded.

"I think it galled him that conservative business people would suspect that he, a wealthy product himself of our capitalistic system, would do anything to damage that system," Mr. Connally says.

An original plan for four fund-raising dinners—in Houston, Fort Worth, San Antonio and Dallas—appalled the Governor, he writes. He says that he told Mr. Kennedy it would make the Texans "think you are trying to financially rape the state."

Four nonpartisan appearances and a single fund-raising din-

ner, in Austin, were agreed upon instead, the Governor writes. However, he continues, his planning for them was disrupted by Washington advance men, the White House staff and Mr. Yarborough.

"They wanted to give the President more crowd exposure and less of the exposure I believed he needed," the Governor says.

The advance men insisted, over his opposition, on the motorcade through downtown Dallas to the Trade Mart and "released the route itself for publication . . . a full three days before the event," Mr. Connally writes.

O'Donnell Agrees

Kenneth O'Donnell, who planned the trip and directed the advance men, said in a telephone interview yesterday that "in essence I agree with what the Governor writes."

"There is no question but what President Kennedy was concerned about retaining Texas support and doing what he could to unite the Democrats there," he said.

"The party in Texas was being ripped apart by the Connally-Yarborough feud, and Connally himself had been a narrow victor, winning by only 25,000 votes. Lyndon Johnson didn't feel that he could bring about unity, because he was involved in the local situation."

Mr. O'Donnell, then special assistant to the President and executive director of the National Democratic Committee, is now a management consultant in Boston. He remained in the White House for one year after President Johnson's accession and then resigned.

Mr. O'Donnell also confirmed that he had pressed for more "crowd" exposure.

"The President wanted to meet the people, not just fund raisers and politicians, wherever he went, and it was my responsibility to see that he did," he recalled. "There was nothing abnormal about what we did in Texas."