

Connally Says JFK Image Was Fading

By ROBERT HEARD

AUSTIN, Tex. (AP) — Upset by William Manchester's book on the Kennedy assassination, Texas Gov. John B. Connally has issued a statement saying President John F. Kennedy's "declining popularity" prompted the trip on which he lost his life.

Connally grimly read the 344-word statement to newsmen Tuesday. He declined further comment.

"This transparent attempt to dictate history through a captive voice is shocking," Connally said.

The first installment of a condensed version of Manchester's book, "The Death of a President," in Look magazine appeared on newsstands recently. Connally said it purports to be factual history but "actually is a recitation of recollections and observations collected and reflected through the prisms of prejudice."

"For example," he said, "it has been reported that President Kennedy was unwillingly brought to Texas to settle a local political argument.

"To the extent that there was any significant argument prior to the trip, it was between then Vice President Johnson and Sen. (Ralph) Yarborough (D-Tex), both of whom were readily available in Washington.

"The fact is it is common

knowledge that this was part of a series of political trips of President Kennedy's own making, planned in the wake of polls reflecting declining popularity."

Connally did not say, or permit newsmen to ask, if he had read the book or the magazine article or if he based his remarks on news report. He prefaced his statement this way: "I propose to read this statement and have nothing further to say."

He and Mrs. Connally, who also was in the presidential limousine in Dallas when Connally and Kennedy were shot, have refused for three years to elaborate on details of Kennedy's trip, Connally said.

"Regretfully, we have concluded that we no longer have that choice in view of recent developments," he said.

Instead of authentic history, Manchester's book "turns out to be an astonishing propaganda instrument cleverly woven to reflect favorably on those who gave it birth, while rudely discrediting others involved," Connally said.

Sen. John Tower, R-Tex., said in Washington Tuesday that he received a fake bomb in the mail after the assassination, apparently sent by someone who thought conservatives were responsible for Kennedy's death. Police persuaded him not to disclose the matter at that time, Tower said.