

John Connally Pleads Innocent To Charges

F-Pool
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WASHINGTON (AP) — John B. Connally pleaded innocent Friday to charges of bribery, conspiracy and perjury in the milk-fund affair.

Chief U.S. District Judge George L. Hart Jr. Connally, asked the former secretary of the Treasury in the Nixon administration if he had read the five-count indictment and if he intended to plead not guilty.

"Yes, your honor, I do," the former Texas governor said in a loud voice.

Connally's attorney, Edward Bennett Williams, asked Hart for four or five days to file motions. Hart granted the request.

Then Williams asked that Hart not set a trial date immediately.

"The motions will go directly to that subject," Williams said.

Hart said he would be on vacation in September and wasn't inclined to grant any motion for a speedy trial.

There was courthouse speculation that Williams would seek to have the trial moved from the capital to somewhere in Texas, where Connally is head of a Houston law firm that is among the nation's largest.

Connally is charged with accepting two \$5,000 payments

from Associated Milk Producers Inc., a Texas-based dairy-farmer cooperative that is the nation's largest, in return for helping persuade President Nixon to hike milk price supports in 1971.

He also is charged with lying to a Watergate grand jury on two occasions and conspiring illegally to obstruct justice by covering up the alleged bribes.

Connally has consistently denied taking the money. He has testified that it was offered to him as a political fund, not as a bribe, and that he refused to take it.

Connally's one-time friend Jake Jacobsen, a former White House aide to President Lyndon B. Johnson, pleaded guilty Wednesday to giving Connally the two payments.

Jacobsen once swore Connally refused the money, but has changed his story and is expected to be the star prosecution witness against Connally at trial.

Another milk-producer official, former general manager Harold S. Nelson, has also pleaded guilty to authorizing the Jacobsen payment for Connally.