

## Guess Who Pays?

# A \$300,000

# Price Tag on China Trip

WASHINGTON — (AP) — President Nixon's trip to China is costing taxpayers at least \$300,000 in transportation alone, and the total cost could be several times that amount.

The White House says it hasn't calculated the trip's cost. Some estimates can be made, however, based on such known expenses as the hourly operating costs of the presidential jet.

But the cost to the taxpayers is dwarfed by the multimillion-dollar outlays being made by the television networks and other news organizations to provide coverage of the President's trip. Media expenses include, for example, 10 cents a word for dispatches transmitted from China.

Probably the biggest single government expense is transportation.

### Flying Hours

The Air Force calculates the costs of operating Nixon's Boeing 707 jet, the "Spirit of '76," at \$1180 per flying hour. Since Nixon's round trip to Peking is taking about 40 flying hours, that figures out to \$47,200.

Add the cost of a backup jet from the presidential fleet, plus about a half dozen other similar-sized government planes which are now in China, which are expected there this week or which made the trip earlier, and the government transportation tab exceeds \$300,000.

For the 87 news correspondents and other media personnel who flew to China with Nixon in a pair of chartered Pan Am 707's, the round trip ticket for each was about \$2300 — or a total of more than \$200,000 paid for air fare by news organizations.

One hard-to-determine government expense category is communications.

### Satellite Circuits

Nonsensitive communications between the presidential party and China and the White House are being handled via specially-arranged satellite circuits.

The White House won't say how much that costs, but the going commercial rate for a three-minute telephone call from Washington to Peking is \$14 — plus \$4.50 for each additional minute.

Sources reported that several weeks ago the White House reserved three around-the-clock voice-grade channels on the Comsat satellite linking China with the United States. Each of the channels can be split into 22 circuits of telegraphic transmission.

The White House has been employing also a facsimile transmission system to send presidential documents from Peking to the White House. That requires a voice-grade channel.

### Daily Costs

If the White House is paying the \$4.50 per minute commercial telephone rate, the daily costs for the three satellite channels would exceed \$19,440.

The President and his small official party, as guests of the Chinese government, aren't playing for food and lodging. Other government personnel and newsmen are — but at bargain rates.