

A Tongue Wagger ^{APR 30 1972}

Nixon Will Woo

200 Rich Texans

SfExaminer

KEY BISCAYNE — (UPI) — President Nixon wound up a brief Florida vacation yesterday and prepared to meet the rich Texas political lions in their own den.

In an event that has set tongues to wagging in Washington and in high political circles throughout the country, Nixon will fly today to the Floresville, Tex., ranch of Treasury Secretary John Connally for dinner and conversation with 200 of the state's most influential decision-makers.

The entire Connally family primped their Picoso Ranch for the visit from President Nixon and Connally's wife Nellie said "we want to show him God's country."

The names of the 200 guests were kept secret but it was learned they included wealthy residents from nearby San Antonio who might contribute to Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign.

Red Carpet

At another time, the occasion would be dismissed as just another dinner party, but in an election year the spectacle of a Democratic cabinet member in a crucial state laying out a red carpet reception for a Republican president is considered political gossip of the first order.

The Texas trip follows three days of relaxation at Nixon's Key Biscayne home and in the Bahamas.

This afternoon, Nixon flies to Randolph Air Force Base, San Antonio and then takes a 15-minute helicopter ride to Connally's ranch.

Weather permitting, Connally and his wife will feed the 200 guests under tents surrounding the ranchhouse.

Brother Absent

Two conspicuous absentees were understood to be Connally's brother, Wayne, a Democratic candidate for state lieutenant governor and Gov. Preston Smith, also a Democrat.

Many of those attending were considered stalwarts of the conservative wing of the state's Democratic Party — persons whose support helped win Connally three terms as Texas governor.

That same support would be important for Nixon in a close election this fall. Texas is worth 26 electoral votes. Illinois has the same number and only New York, California and Pennsylvania have more.

In his hairbreadth victory over Hubert Humphrey in 1968, Nixon lost Texas by only 39,000 votes out of three million cast.