

FEBRUARY 25, 1982

Texas is one of the states that is going to be redistricted by the court system. All of the state's politicians had a separate plan of their own devising, but under the one-man, one vote rule, incumbents are finding it mighty tough to lay out their turf according to the box numbers of their wives' kinfolks and street addresses of their home lodge. In fact, with judges and justices applying their uncreative touch to the problem, I look for Mertzson to be voting for some guy that lives in West Houston and thinks West Texas is a hunting resort.

However, I haven't been as concerned with who I was voting with as much as I was being able to vote. Whether my fellow voters were from San Antone or Midland wasn't the problem. What I needed was a panel of judges willing to separate husbands and wives along district lines. In the 32 years of our married life, Child Who Sits in the Sun has canceled all but two of my votes and they were a couple of shots cast against a special holiday in East Texas and a new water fountain for a courthouse square in some little town in the Panhandle.

My records show that the bachelors and the old maids hold the decisive votes. It is impossible for me to say for sure where the strength is, because after every election, the in-house conflict is too intense for me to tell what the outside world is doing.

At every election, I try to vote a secret ballot. Also, to reduce hostilities, I take the bumpers off my pickups to prevent over eager campaign workers from committing them to war. Three years ago, I went to the John Connally for President breakfast in San Angelo. I sat so far out of range of the television cameras that I might as well have been eating my ham and eggs with the stockyard crowd for all I heard and saw of Mr. Connally. But somehow or the other, my wife always finds out who I'm supporting.

One other thing the court had better not overlook is that in the off year of 1978, I think only 39 percent of the registered voters bothered to go to the polls in Texas. Wise as the justices may be, on turnout like that it's possible to create some blank districts in the state. I favor people refusing to vote. Herders are faithful to the right. The big shot analyst claim rainy weather keeps city folks home. I like to think of the guys that are hot and bothered about such matters as free ranges for the coyotes and turning all the farmland into parks as being of an opposite turn. I always think that if the election falls on a mild day, they might be out hiking or having a picnic in place of cutting our throats.

But like I started out saying, who I vote for isn't the point. Most of the time I just dash into the Community Center, take all the revenge the ballot has to offer, and go on to the ranch hoping that Child Who Sits in the Sun has enough winners to keep her happy.

Newspaper reports claim that in spite of the conflict, the primaries are going to be held in May. Hombres who make casual appraisals of crossing party lines have never lived in an Indian lodge. I'd still like to have my picture taken with John Connally, even if it did cost me some hair.