

FBI Search On For ITT Lobbyist

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — The key witness in the International Telephone and Telegraph investigation, Mrs. Dita D. Beard, is reportedly being sought by more than a score of FBI agents, concentrating on the Denver area.

Mrs. Beard, Washington lobbyist for the giant conglomerate, is the reported author of a memorandum implicating Attorney General John Mitchell in the settlement of the anti-trust case against ITT.

Senate Judiciary Committee chairman James O. Eastland (D-Mass.) already has issued two subpoenas for her and it was at his request that the FBI agents were assigned to the search.

Committee sources said Mrs. Beard had phoned a Washington doctor from Denver seeking a prescription for heart trouble.

'Leave of Absence'

Rep. Bob Wilson, Republican congressman from San Diego, told the San Diego Union that Mrs. Beard had called him in Washington Wednesday, a day after the memo was published by columnist Jack Anderson.

Wilson said she told him "she'd been up to New York, that they (ITT) were putting her on a leave of absence, and that she was going to get out of town."

Wilson, the paper said, asked her where she was

going. He quoted her reply as: "I have no idea, but where I'm going they won't be able to find me and I won't be able to talk to them."

The paper reported Wilson said the FBI had been in contact with him about Mrs. Beard's whereabouts.

'Absurd'

But Wilson also said it was "absurd" for anyone to connect the guarantee of \$400,000 to the GOP convention with Justice Department litigation against ITT.

Wilson helped arrange the guarantee and was told President Nixon wanted the convention in San Diego. Wilson said presidential counselor Robert Finch told him of Nixon's wishes. Wilson said he and Finch were

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in San Diego last May 12 to dedicate a national historical monument and ITT held its stockholders meeting the same day.

Wilson said Finch told him San Diego, which earlier rejected the idea of hosting the convention, still might win the convention bidding if it could come up with \$800,000 cash.

Wilson said he met later that day with Harold S. Geneen, ITT board chairman, and Harold P. James, president of the Sheraton hotels, an ITT subsidiary. Wilson said Geneen agreed to guarantee \$300,000 for San Diego's bid and then upped it to \$400,000.

'In Limb'

Wilson said Geneen and James told him they recently spent \$250,000 promoting a new Sheraton hotel in Hawaii and the San Diego commitment seemed reasonable since the firm had hotels here.

The Justice Department litigation was not discussed, Wilson said. He added he had no knowledge of negotiations between the firm and the department to settle the case out of court.

Wilson said the Sheraton hotel now being built would be completed in time for the convention and it had been designated to house the President's staff. Nixon was reported planning to stay there at least one night, Wilson said, but he added "it may be in limbo now."