



DITA BEARD
Key witness

'Hard as Nails'

Deta Top DC Lobbyist

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — Dita Davis Beard has achieved recognition as one of Washington's most highly paid and effective lobbyists by being tough — hard-drinking, hard-talking and hard-working.

Mrs. Beard, 53, hospitalized in Denver, is sought as a key witness by the Senate Judiciary Committee inves-

tigating whether Justice Department officials dropped an antitrust suit in return for a \$400,000 contribution to the Republican national convention.

She is the purported author of a memorandum linking the settlement of the antitrust suit against ITT with its offer of the contribution to the GOP convention.

More Than \$50,000

A divorced mother of five children, Mrs. Beard has been the sole Washington lobbyist for International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. since 1961. A native of Kansas and a high school graduate, she reportedly makes more than \$50,000 a year.

A large, gregarious brunette well known among members of Congress, Mrs. Beard is an inveterate party-giver at political functions where she apparently speaks her mind.

"Talking to Mrs. Beard is like talking to a man," said

Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin (D-Calif.). "She has a very well-known reputation for this."

'Hard As Nails'

Other friends or acquaintances described her as "salty," "hard-drinking, hard-cussing" and "hard as nails."

A familiar figure at the Capitol Hill Republican Club, Mrs. Beard worked in President Nixon's pre-1968 convention campaign.

Her daughter, Lane, 26, has been a secretary in the finance section of the GOP National Committee for about two years. The family resides in Arlington, Va.

She holds the title of Special Assistant to Washington ITT Vice President William R. Merriam, who is in charge of the company's Washington office.

A lover of the outdoors, Mrs. Beard is known to be a crack rifle shot, a camping and skiing enthusiast and a snowmobile driver.