

Tough I.T.T. Chief

Harold Sydney Geneen

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By MICHAEL J. JENSEN

Harold Sydney Geneen, a 62-year-old British-born naturalized citizen, has built a reputation as one of the toughest corporate chiefs in American industry and has been periodically under fire for his business tactics since he took command as president of the International Telephone and

Man in the News
Telephone and Telegraph Corporation 12 years ago. The highest paid executive in the country (his

salary in 1970 was \$766,000), he has built International Telephone in the last decade into a massive conglomerate with annual sales of more than \$7-billion, starting with a modest \$811-million, foreign-oriented communications company.

In the process, the company has been investigated and attacked by Ralph Nader, the consumer advocate; the Justice Department, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Federal Trade Commission and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Cut Expenses Ruthlessly

Mr. Geneen's propensity for blunt talk to his executives is legend and, although he denies most of the colorful quotations attributed to him, stories persist that he does not mince words.

One former International Telephone vice president recalled recently that Mr. Geneen started a meeting by saying, "Gentlemen, I've been thinking. Bull times zero is zero bull. Bull divided by zero is infinity bull. And I'm sick and tired of the bull you've been feeding me."

Another former employe recalled that when Mr. Geneen wanted to shave expenses he did it ruthlessly. "I remember one time I got an order from Geneen that said, 'Get rid of two bodies, one male and one female.' Those were his exact words."

Mr. Geneen in recent months has been unavailable to the press, either because of pending litigation, or scheduled appearances before



A reputation for blunt talk to executives.

lic accountant, keeps more than a dozen briefcases stuffed with reports for reading at home, on planes and during other recesses from the office.

Associates say he has sacrificed virtually his entire personal life for his duties at International Telephone. His first marriage ended in divorce, and he is now married to his former secretary from the Bell & Howell Company, where he once worked.

Goes to the Edge

One former executive said that Mr. Geneen would walk "right up to the ragged edge," and he has occasionally been criticized for getting a bit too close. The company's accounting procedures, for example, have come under attack, although some former managers for the company defend them as merely imaginative.

The highlight of Mr. Geneen's career was the biggest merger in history—the \$1.5-billion acquisition of the Hartford Fire Insurance Company. It was approval of that merger, as part of an over-all package, that is currently under Senate scrutiny.

Mr. Geneen (his name is pronounced with a soft G) attended New York University at night. He started his business career as a runner on Wall Street, progressing to executive jobs with Bell & Howell, the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation and the Raytheon Company.

Along the way he has attracted executives who, like himself, are willing to subordinate themselves to the job in return for a heady corporate atmosphere and high pay—more than \$200,000 each in salary and bonus for the company's five top officers in 1970.

"He's got them by their limousines," said one International Telephone alumnus.

such bodies as the Senate Judiciary Committee, now investigating a possible link between an antitrust settlement and a contribution to the Republican National Convention by a subsidiary of his company.

Yesterday the Senate committee heard testimony that Mr. Geneen himself had given the order for International Telephone to pay some costs of the convention.

Heading an enterprise with more than 200 subsidiaries scattered around the world, Mr. Geneen, a certified pub-