

Lawyer Says Dita Denies Any ITT Deal Was Made

A.P. & U.P.

Denver

A lawyer for lobbyist Dita D. Beard said yesterday she denies that International Telephone & Telegraph Corp. made a deal with the Justice Department for settlement of an antitrust suit in return for a donation to the Republican National Convention.

Mrs. Beard, 53, also denied that former Attorney General John Mitchell took part in the final ITT suit settlement and called Senate Judiciary Committee hearings in the case "an absurd circus, exaggerated by personal ambition and extreme opportunism by a few people," the lawyer said.

Mrs. Beard's statements, the first since she was linked to the ITT settlement by a memo she purportedly wrote suggesting that a deal was made in high places, were released by her attorney, David W. Fleming of Van Nuys.

TROUBLE

Fleming said Mrs. Beard, Washington lobbyist for ITT who has been hospitalized with heart trouble in Denver since March 3, would make no further statements "until her testimony before the Senate committee."

Mrs. Beard, in her statement, called claims by columnist Jack Anderson linking the ITT settlement with a \$400,000 donation by ITT's Sheraton Hotel division to the GOP convention "false innuendoes and outright lies."

Fleming said Mrs. Beard

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"asked me to announce that she is extremely anxious to clear up innuendos and outright lies" in the ITT controversy.

He said Mrs. Beard is hoping to testify in the case "at the earliest possible opportunity." Fleming said Mrs. Beard denied all allegations about the memo on which Anderson based his columns.

TESTIFY

In a separate statement, Mrs. Beard's physician, Dr. David Garland, said he was unable to tell when she might be available to testify to Senate investigators, either in person or from her room at the Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital.

Mrs. Beard was hospitalized last week for treatment of angina pectoris. She was reported to have suffered further chest pains and an irregular heartbeat on Monday and Tuesday.

Garland said Mrs. Beard

is "still in serious condition."

He said the chest pains were controlled by medication but that they have delayed her recovery. Garland said he believed she would be able to "answer written interrogatories by Monday."

Garland said the date for her final release from the hospital still is uncertain and that he didn't know whether investigators from the Senate Judiciary Committee might wish to question her before her release.

MEMO

It was Mrs. Beard's inter-office memo about talks with former Attorney General Mitchell that launched the ITT-Justice Department controversy last week. The news reports prompted acting Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst to ask the Senate Judiciary Committee to open hearings into his nomination to succeed Mitchell.

Yesterday, in his second

day of testimony about two interviews he held with Mrs. Beard, Anderson associate Brit Hume said he had no impression that she was not in control of her faculties during a confrontation she says she had with Mitchell last May.

Hume says Mrs. Beard told him that Mitchell had spoken to her of an order from President Nixon to go easy on ITT in the final ITT settlement.

Hume said Mrs. Beard spoke with Mitchell all through a buffet dinner following the Kentucky Derby in Frankfort last May.

ATTACK

He said Mrs. Beard acknowledged that she had some sort of attack after her meeting with Mitchell, but said her illness was not necessarily in Kentucky.

In a bitter exchange with Senator Edward Gurney (Rep-Fla.), Anderson refused to disclose who gave him the memo.

Repeatedly pressed by



AP Wirephoto

DAVID W. FLEMING
Dita's attorney

Gurney if it was William Merriam, Mrs. Beard's boss, Anderson answered, "If that's your last question on my source, I'll answer that." Gurney declined to make such an agreement.

After the committee finished hearing from Anderson and Hume in mid-afternoon, the sessions were recessed until Tuesday morning, when Mitchell will be called to testify, followed by ITT President Harold S. Geneen.