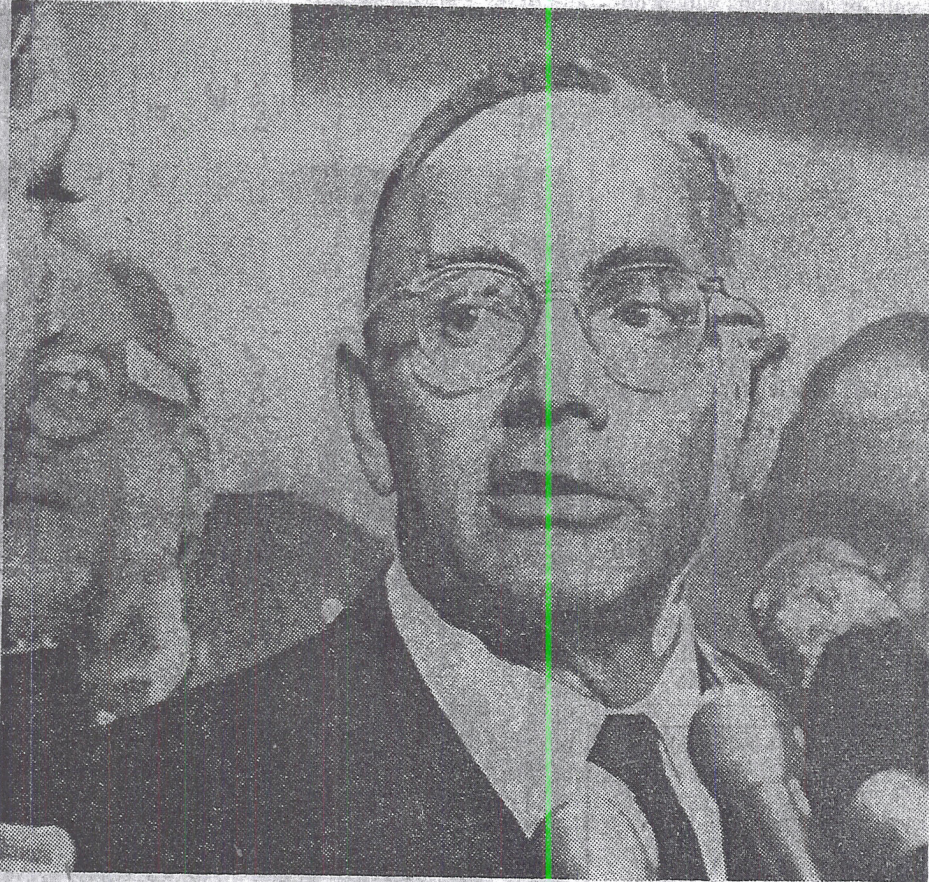


ITT Says It Shredded Files Of Lobbyist Dita Beard



UPI Telephoto

ITT PRESIDENT HAROLD S. GENEEN IN WASHINGTON
A belief that 'somehow our files were open to the public'

Testimony By Firm's President

Associated Press

Washington

The president of International Telephone & Telegraph Corp. yesterday confirmed reports security agents from his New York office shredded the files of ITT lobbyist Dita Beard two weeks ago.

Harold Geneen said that after publication of a controversial memo signed by Mrs. Beard, someone in his firm had ordered the files placed in a shredder and destroyed.

The memo published by columnist Jack Anderson drew a connection between a financial commitment to the Republican National Convention in San Diego and an out-of-court settlement of three antitrust suits then pending against ITT.

Before Geneen testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator James Eastland (Dem-Miss.) announced that six committee members will question Mrs. Beard on Monday in Denver, where she is hospitalized with a heart ailment.

REACTION

Geneen told the committee that the shredding "was a reaction to a belief that somehow our files were open to the public."

Anderson has testified sources other than Mrs. Beard passed the memo to him.

The first report of the shredding came from Anderson aide Brit Hume who interviewed Mrs. Beard and quoted her as saying also that ITT officials had told her to get out of town.

Geneen said a report on the shredding incident is under preparation and he promised to provide the committee with a copy.

Geneen said the sole purpose of ITT's financial commitment to the San Diego tourist bureau was to boost the business and image of the conglomerate's Sheraton Hotel chain.

The company planned to

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build a new hotel in San Diego and Geneen said the Republican convention seemed to be an ideal means for opening it.

He emphasized that the ITT commitment for the convention totaled \$200,000 — \$100,000 in cash and a pledge for an additional \$100,000 if that were matched by \$200,000 from other San Diego businesses.

The Judiciary Committee's decision for six members to go to Mrs. Beard's bedside resulted from a conference call yesterday between her two heart surgeons and Senators Edward M. Kennedy, (Dem-Mass.), and Marlow Cook (Rep-Ky.)

Kennedy quoted the doctors as saying it would be at least several weeks before Mrs. Beard, 53, could be brought to Washington and

interviewed by the full committee in a neighboring hospital.

MEMBERS

Committee chairman Eastland named Democrats Kennedy, Philip Hart of Michigan, John V. Tunney of California, and Republicans Cook, Charles McM. Mathias of Maryland and Ed Gurney of Florida to talk to Mrs. Beard for about an hour Monday at the Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital.

In the ninth day of testimony yesterday, Cook and Kennedy disagreed sharply over whose reputation was being injured most by the hearings into the nomination of Richard G. Kleindienst to be attorney general.

Occasionally pounding his fists on the table, Cook said some erroneous news accounts have served to defame the character of Kleindienst and other administration witnesses.

VOTE

The committee unanimously approved Kleindienst's nomination before Anderson's accusations were published. The Senate has not acted on the committee report but Eastland says he considers the nomination approved in committee and he does not plan another vote.

Kleindienst, who asked for the new hearings, says he played no direct role in the out-of-court settlement reached last July while he was deputy attorney general.

Cook criticized The New York Times, The Evening Star of Washington and The Washington Post for the way they covered the previous day's hearings.

He singled out an error in a caption of a picture on the front page of The Times which incorrectly identified Assistant Attorney General Robert C. Mardian as William Merriam, head of ITT's Washington office.

SCENE

The picture, carried by United Press International, showed Mardian bending over former Attorney General John N. Mitchell during his testimony before the committee Tuesday.

Cook said the caption was corrected by midafternoon but was not changed in The Times until later editions.

Cook also noted an incorrect date on when Mitchell said he met with ITT President Harold Geneen and a reference to another Mitchell meeting with White House aide Peter M. Flanagan.

Cook then turned to Mitchell and both agreed the effect of the news stories was to damage the character of Kleindienst and the other Administration witnesses.

INTERRUPTION

At that point, Kennedy interrupted to say that the reputation of Mrs. Beard had been equally damaged by other witnesses called by the Republicans.

"She has probably undergone about as much vilification as anyone," Kennedy said.

Though Mitchell was called back before the committee yesterday, most of the questioning gave him an opportunity to deny repeatedly that he played any role in getting the convention to San Diego or in the outcome of the ITT-Justice Department negotiations.

Tunney repeatedly questioned Mitchell about meetings he held with Republican Lieutenant Governor Ed Reinecke of California last spring and fall.

Tunney said either Mitchell or Reinecke is lying about whether ITT's financial pledge to the convention city came up during their discussion.

DATE

He said Reinecke told him March 3 that he had discussed the convention arrangements with Mitchell at a meeting in the Attorney General's office on March 17, 1971. Mitchell has maintained throughout he had no knowledge of who was financing the convention.

One hour after the phone conversation with Reinecke, Tunney said the lieutenant governor revised his story to place the conversation with Mitchell in September