

# Dita's ITT Denial Called 'Incredible'

By William J. Eaton

WASHINGTON — (CDN) — Lobbyist Dita Beard has disowned a memo about a political deal to settle antitrust suits against ITT.

Columnist Jack Anderson, who first publicized the memo nearly three weeks ago, said Mrs. Beard's claim that it was a forgery was "part of some of the most incredible and arrogant lies I have heard in Washington."

A week ago, she denied Anderson's charge that the giant firm had pledged up to \$400,000 to bring the Republican convention to San Diego in return for favorable Justice Department action on the antitrust cases.

Her statement then, released by her lawyer in Denver, did not deny the authenticity of the memo. Mrs. Beard's statement yesterday, obtained by her lawyer but announced by Senate Republican leader Hugh Scott (Pa.) said:

"Mr. Anderson's memo is a forgery, and not mine. I did not prepare it and could not have since to my knowledge the assertions in it regarding the antitrust cases and former Attorney General John Mitchell are untrue.

"I do not know who did prepare it, who forged my initials to it, how it got into Jack Anderson's hands or why. But, I repeat, I do know it is not my memo and is a hoax."

"I did prepare a memo at the time indicated, at the request of Bill Merriam (ITT's Washington office chief), to him, concerning the plans for the Republican convention in San Diego," Mrs. Beard's statement said.

*(In one edition of The Examiner yesterday, the word "not" was dropped from the paragraph above, making it appear wrongly that Mrs. Beard acknowledged the memo to be hers.)*

"However, it was not the memo Jack Anderson has put in evidence before the Senate."

There were plenty of skeptics.

"If the memo was false,

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why didn't she deny it immediately," asked Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), who said he found Mrs. Beard's statement "almost unbelievable."

Her repudiation of the memo came less than 25 hours after other ITT officials testified that several sacks full of ITT files were shredded just after Anderson quoted the memo in his column. Mrs. Beard joined in the destruction, according to one witness, to avoid "embarrassment" that might result if other ITT documents were divulged.

A spokesman said Scott, who has been highly critical of the Senate investigation that has delayed a vote on confirmation of Attorney General-designate Richard Kleindienst, suggested to Mrs. Beard's lawyer, David W. Fleming, that a disavowal of the memo would be helpful.

The Beard statement was sent by telecopier from Denver to a Washington public relations firm and relayed to Scott who then made it public, the spokesman said.

## Inquiry Delayed

Seven senators, led by Sen. Philip A. Hart (D-Mich.), were planning to question Mrs. Beard in her hospital room Monday since doctors said her heart condition ruled out an appearance in Washington. But the beside inquiry was postponed indefinitely when the senators decided to remain here in case of roll call votes on a constitutional amendment according equal rights to women.

Mrs. Beard, however, said the delay in the questioning prompted her statement.

"I feel it is necessary that I make certain facts clear at this time," Mrs. Beard said. "These facts cannot remain unknown and unspoken any longer while myself, my family, my friends, my company, Mr. Kleindienst and the Republican administration are subjected to continued ridicule and embarrassment as a result of the lies that have been stated at the hearing."

Anderson said his associate, Brit Hume, confronted her with the memo on Feb. 23 and she acknowledged its authenticity, then spent two hours the next day explaining it line-by-line to Hume.

## Penciled Initial

ITT said two of its Washington staff members, news director John Horner and his deputy, Bernard Goodrich, were present when Hume saw Mrs. Beard that day.

"In the course of the discussion with Hume, Mrs.

Beard said that if it were not for a penciled initial "D" beside her typed name, she would swear that the memorandum was not hers," an ITT spokesman said.

"She then rushed to New York, had long conference with ITT officials over it and they sent a security man into the Washington office to shred sacks full of documents," Anderson said. "Now and only now does it suddenly occur to her that it is a forgery. For her to expect anyone to believe this is the most incredible thing that has happened in this inquiry. It is part of some of the most incredible and arrogant lies I have ever heard in Washington."

The memo printed by Anderson says Mrs. Beard advised Merriam that Mitchell was secretly helping to get the ITT antitrust settlement the firm wanted, acting under directions of President Nixon.