

LOBBYIST SUFFERS A HEART SEIZURE; QUESTIONING ENDS

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Senators Halt Hearing When
Mrs. Beard, I.T.T. Aide,
Moans With Pain

SHE HAD TESTIFIED FIRST

Stated That Someone Bent
on Destroying Her Had
Forged Key Memo

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DENVER, March 26—A Senate subcommittee's hospital-room interrogation of Mrs. Dita D. Beard, the ailing Washington lobbyist for the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, came to an abrupt halt today after Mrs. Beard clutched her chest and moaned with heart pains.

Before her collapse, Mrs. Beard stated under oath that "someone" bent upon destroying her had forged the memorandum that touched off the controversy over the Government's settlement of three antitrust cases against I.T.T.

"Somebody was trying to put a fast period to my existence," she said.

Shaken members of the subcommittee indicated after her collapse that they would not risk Mrs. Beard's health—and a possibility that she could die from the stress of the questioning—by going forward with the interrogation session scheduled for tomorrow and Tuesday.

Excerpts from testimony are
printed on Page 22.

Declaring that "basic decency would compel us to withdraw from further interrogation," Senator Philip A. Hart, Democrat of Michigan, the subcommittee chairman, announced that the seven-member panel would meet later to vote to adjourn the hearings here.

Senator Hart conceded that "clearly it will inhibit" the Senate Judiciary Committee's inquiry into allegations that the Justice Department settled three antitrust cases against I.T.T. in exchange for a large financial commitment from an I.T.T. subsidiary to help finance the 1972 Republican National Convention.

Want Explanation

The apparent end of the questioning of Mrs. Beard for the near future, and perhaps for many weeks, placed the future of the hearings in doubt. Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, suggested that the Judiciary Committee should now investigate "other areas" of Justice Department activity that have been questioned.

However, some Republican leaders have insisted that the hearings should not proceed until Mrs. Beard's explanation was obtained.

The controversy grew out of the publication by Jack Anderson, the columnist, of a memorandum, purportedly written by Mrs. Beard, linking

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the settlement to the financial pledge.

Before her attack ended this afternoon's hearings, Mrs. Beard said that unnamed enemies had forged the memorandum published by Mr. Anderson. She had denied any knowledge of a deal between I.T.T. and the Government. But she added new fuel to the controversy by saying that several weeks before the antitrust cases were settled, a White House official had telephoned I.T.T.'s Washington office to inquire about details of the company's financial commitment to the convention.

Mrs. Beard had appeared to be proceeding comfortably under relaxed questioning from the Senators when her physicians noticed indications, on a heart monitoring device attached to her body, that she was suffering "irregularities" in her heart's right ventricle. They discussed it but did not notify the Senators.

Received Pain Killer

Five minutes later, at 4:03 P.M., Mrs. Beard's face flushed and twisted with pain. She fell back in her bed, moaned and reached toward the two doctors. They cleared the room of Senators and others and quickly gave her a shot of demerol, a pain killer.

Dr. L. M. Radetsky, one of the physicians, said afterward that the seizure had resulted when "premature ventricular constrictions" of the left ventricle occurred. When these occur in the left ventricle, he said, a coronary attack can result, possibly causing death.

He said that Mrs. Beard might be well enough to testify tomorrow and that if so her condition would benefit because it would end her apprehension of facing the Senators' interrogation. But the doctors said it would be best for her if the committee "would quash the subpoena" for her testimony.

In a 90-minute interrogation session this morning, Mrs. Beard asserted that the published memo was forged by "someone" who wished to destroy her. She said that some I.T.T. officials were "delighted" to believe that she had written it.

'Never Aware of'

In a prepared statement read into the record this morning by her attorney, David W. Fleming, Mrs. Beard declared, "I was never aware of, or conversant with, any facts or information which would lead me to believe there was any connection, direct or indirect, between the financial pledge and "a favorable settlement of the antitrust cases."

She categorically denied an earlier sworn statement of Brit Hume, Mr. Anderson's investigator, who had testified that she had admitted authorship of the memorandum.

Mrs. Beard told the Senators today that she was under the influence of barbiturates, alcohol and hysteria when she talked to Mr. Hume, and that she could not recall portions of the interview. But she insisted that she told Mr. Hume that she was not the author of the memorandum that Mr. Anderson had.

Mr. Hume, who is here with about 75 newsmen covering the three scheduled days of questions of Mrs. Beard, called this a direct lie.

"She told me, 'I wrote it, of course I wrote it.'" he said.

Recalls Part of Memo

In her testimony Mrs. Beard conceded that she did recall writing a memorandum about I.T.T.'s commitment to the Republican convention, and that it did contain some of the material in Mr. Anderson's published memorandum. She recalled writing the substance of passages in the Anderson memo that cautioned I.T.T. officials to be silent about the company's role in the convention, and adding, "Other than permitting John Mitchell, Ed Reincke, Bob Haldeman and Nixon (besides Wilson) of course no one has known from whom that \$400,000 commitment had come."

Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell has testified that he had never been informed of the convention arrangements or of any commitment by I.T.T. Mrs. Beard told the Senators

that she wrote this message to William R. Merriam, the head of I.T.T.'s Washington office, after he told her that he had received a call from the White House expressing confusion over I.T.T.'s commitment.

She quoted Mr. Merriam as asking, "Is \$600,000 going to Nixon's campaign?" She told the Senators that to clear up uncertainty about the commitment and to caution others to keep it quiet, she wrote a memorandum in late June or early July that contained the substance of the first two and one-half paragraphs of Mr. Anderson's five-paragraph memorandum.

The document said by her to be forged contains additional passages linking Mr. Mitchell to an agreement to settle the antitrust suits, in connection with I.T.T.'s "noble commitment to support the convention. She called the "noble commitment", "pure baloney" that she would never have written, because I.T.T.'s Sheraton hotel subsidiary has three hotels in San Diego that will profit from the convention.

Mrs. Beard expressed the belief that the identifying initial "D," which first led her to believe the memorandum had been written by her, was traced onto the memorandum from the first letter of her signature appearing on some other document.

Secretary's Affidavit

Her attorney released an affidavit from Mrs. Susan Litchman, a secretary for her in the Washington office last summer who now lives in Toronto.

Mrs. Litchman said she recalled typing a memorandum for Mrs. Beard containing some of the material in Mr. Anderson's memorandum, but that she did not believe she typed the Anderson version because the word "commitment" was repeatedly misspelled. She said she also could not recall other material in it.

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She added that she also did not type another memorandum bearing the June 25 date and Mrs. Beard's name — but no reference to the antitrust suits — which has been released by I.T.T. as the "VGEN@ UINE memorandum" written by Mrs. Beard.

Mrs. Beard's testimony contained repeated references to her differences with Mr. Merriam and with Edward J. Gerrity, I.T.T.'s public relations chief, coupled with statements tying her present troubles to two individuals within the company hierarchy.

After relating how the appearance of the memorandum convinced her that "someone was deliberately putting me in a position to be used as a vehicle to embarrass the Administration, embarrass my company and destroy me," she added that Mr. Gerrity "insisted I meet with Hume and tried to assure me that I could somehow explain it."

Found Lack of Trust

Asked by the subcommittee chairman, Senator Philip A. Hart, Democrat of Michigan, why she waited almost three weeks before publicly disowning the memorandum, she blamed lack of trust and support from her immediate superiors.

On the day before Mr. Anderson published the memorandum she went to New York, where she said Mr. Gerrity asserted that she had written the memorandum, and where she was not allowed to see the "man I revere and respect, my company's president, Mr. Harold Geneen."

She said she did not publicly disown the memorandum because "I had absolutely no one to turn to."

"The people in the Washington office obviously were delighted to think I'd done it," she said. "I could not make them listen. I didn't know where to go for help."

Mrs. Beard said she left for Montana on the advice of her physician but was forced to enter the hospital here after she suffered a heart seizure on an airplane. Mrs. Beard's doctor in Washington, Victor L. Lyszka, has testified that he advised her against taking the trip, and that she had told him that she had written the memorandum published by Mr. Anderson when she was "mad and disturbed."