

Mrs. Beard 'Mousetrapped'?

ITT Memo Gains Support

By The Associated Press

Rep. Bob Wilson has said the memo published by columnist Jack Anderson in the International Telephone & Telegraph Corp. controversy was written by lobbyist Dita Beard under pressure from an ITT executive who wanted to get her in trouble, the Baltimore Sun said today.

Mrs. Beard has denied under oath that she wrote the Anderson-published memo, which linked an ITT contribution to the Republican National Convention with a settlement in an antitrust case that ITT had pending with the Justice Department.

The Sun said that in an interview March 3 Wilson attributed the memo in Anderson's column to Mrs. Beard and made other statements that conflict with testimony ITT officials have given to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

THE SUN said its story was based on a 45-minute taperecorded interview that the California Republican congressman had in his San Diego office with Robert E. Cox, a reporter for the San Diego Union.

Sen. John V. Tunney, D-Calif., made public in Washington today what he said was a full transcript of the interview.

Efforts to reach Wilson, who was instrumental in the Republicans' decision to hold their convention in his home city this August, were not successful, the Sun reported. It said an aide advised that Wilson was on vacation. Wilson is chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee.

The Senate Judiciary Committee has been investigating charges concerning the memo as part of its examination into President Nixon's nomination of Richard Kleindienst to be attorney general. It has additional deliberations scheduled today into whether Kleindienst acted improperly in the ITT case while he was deputy attorney general.

The Baltimore Sun said Wil-



MRS. DITA BEARD . . . REP. BOB WILSON

—AP WIREPHOTO.

son claimed that William R. Merriam, Mrs. Beard's boss in the ITT office, instructed her to write a memo linking the antitrust settlement with an ITT pledge to underwrite \$400,000 of San Diego's cash bid to get the Republican convention.

"He said that Mrs. Beard was too smart to volunteer to put such a sensitive matter down in writing but that Mr. Merriam insisted," the Sun said in recounting Wilson's remarks. "According to the congressman, Mr. Merriam was confused about the nature of the ITT convention pledge and ordered her to 'write it down'."

QUOTING Wilson directly on a conversation he said he had with Mrs. Beard, the Sun continued: "So she hand-carried it, she said, to Merriam and at the end it says, 'Please tear this up, huh?' So there it is—Jack Anderson had the original, not just a copy but the original."

Merriam, in a sworn statement to the Senate Judiciary Committee, said of the memo as published by Anderson with a date of June 25, 1971: "I did not receive this alleged memorandum from Mrs. Beard on June 25, 1971, or at any other time."

But in the March 3 interview, the Sun quoted Wilson

as saying: "Merriam personally told me last Monday that he got the memo." 24 FEB

Wilson, a friend of Mrs. Beard and of ITT President Harold S. Geneen, said he was "sure as can be" that Mrs. Beard was "mousetrapped" into writing the memo by Merriam and Edward J. Garrity, an ITT senior vice president in charge of public relations, the Sun reported.

THE SUN said Wilson described what he called a plot by Merriam and Garrity to get Mrs. Beard fired, because she had access to Geneen that they did not.

Wilson said in the interview, the newspaper reported, that "she would tell Mr. Geneen, 'Goddammit, Hal, you're just as wrong as can be.'"

The Sun then quotes Wilson directly as saying: "Everybody else is scared to death of him, and she just tells him what she thinks and he respects somebody like that."

The Sun said Wilson added that two years ago the ITT aides tried to isolate Mrs. Beard, refused to let her talk with Wilson, and told Geneen she was sick.

WILSON is quoted as saying that he told Geneen: "There is not a more effective lobbyist for any company in Washington than Dita Beard," and

that Geneen responded, "I know it, and she's going to have her job with me as long as she wants."

Testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee in Denver on March 26 from the hospital bed where she was confined with a heart ailment, Mrs. Beard said she had never written the memo as it appeared in Anderson's column for papers of Feb. 29. She said she remembered portions of it, but not those in which the ITT convention underwriting was linked to an out-of-court settlement of the antitrust case.

No copy of a memo that Mrs. Beard admits to writing has surfaced.

The Sun noted that at the time of the Wilson interview "only one memo had been mentioned, and that was the one published by Mr. Anderson."

IN THE interview, the Sun said, Wilson dismissed the suggestion of a Justice Department deal as "the inaccuracy of Dita Beard's memo."

Continuing Wilson's account, the Sun reported: "He said the implication could not be correct because the convention pledge was made on May 12 while Mrs. Beard's only meeting with John N. Mitchell—the former attorney general with whom she allegedly discussed a deal—occurred nearly two weeks earlier."

The San Diego Union, in its account of the interview, reported that Wilson said Merriam visited his office after Anderson made known his version of the memo and told him: "I did get that memo." but "I'm sure I gave it back to Dita."

Wilson said Merriam continued by saying that Mrs. Beard had disagreed, and that he did not know what had happened to the memo, the newspaper said.

Quoting Wilson directly, the Union continued:

"And then what happens . . . ITT puts out a story that nobody ever saw it."