

Dita Acknowledged Memo

'Tape May Prove 3 Lied'

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — ITT lobbyist Dita Beard told Rep. Bob Wilson that she wrote a memo linking a corporate gift to the Republican National Convention in San Diego with an antitrust settlement, the Baltimore Sun said today.

Mrs. Beard has denied writing the memo in question, but a San Diego dispatch to the Sun by a staff member, Walter R. Gordon, said that Wilson (R-San Diego) had told the San Diego Union that Mrs.

Beard told him she did write it.

The Sun said Wilson made his statements in a tape-recorded interview with the San Diego newspaper, but that portions of the interview had not been published by the Union. The Union published its version of the interview today.

Tunney Has Tape

Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.) provided the committee today with a tape recording of the interview and said if it was true, three ITT officials — including Mrs. Beard — might be guilty of

perjury.

After a 90-minute closed-door session of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Tunney told newsmen: "There is a possibility, if Wilson's statement is correct, of three counts of perjury — one against ITT President Harold Geneen, another against Mrs. Beard, and a third against (William) Merriam, ITT's Washington manager."

Wilson sent a telegram to the committee chairman, Sen. James O. Eastland (D-Miss.), in which he indirectly acknowledged that he gave

the interview but denied that he said there was a link between the GOP convention guarantee and the settlement of the antitrust case.

Press 'Inaccuracies'

Wilson, now in the Caribbean on official business, added: "I am confident that your committee will judge this case on the strength of the evidence developed during official hearings rather than on press inaccuracies which have characterized reporting of this case."

In the interview, Wilson, who was instrumental in arranging ITT financing for the convention, said not only that Mrs. Beard acknowl-

edged writing the memo but that her boss, Merriam, acknowledged receiving it.

And, he added, ITT president Geneen told him, "I'll guarantee you up to \$400,000" of the \$800,000 San Diego needed to raise to become the host for the convention.

Geneen has since testified under oath that he never made any such dollar pledge and the only commitment was \$200,000 by ITT's Sheraton Hotels division, which he described as an ordinary investment to promote a new hotel.

The Sun article related that Wilson said Merriam came to see him to discuss the memo on Feb. 28, the day before the Anderson column revealing it appeared. The column was distributed to subscribers on the 28th.

Two days later, Mrs. Beard also called Wilson to discuss the memo, Wilson said, according to the Sun.

Sworn Statement

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."

The Sun quoted Wilson as saying in the tape-recording that it was Merriam who ordered Mrs. Beard to write the memo because he was confused about the nature of the ITT convention pledge.

Wilson was quoted that Mrs. Beard was too smart to put such a sensitive matter on paper, but followed Merriam's orders and hand-delivered the memo to him.

Wilson was quoted that he was "sure as can be" that Mrs. Beard was "mouse-trapped" into writing the memo by Merriam and Edward J. Gerrity, ITT senior vice president in charge of public relations.

Leak to Anderson

The Sun said Wilson believed the memo came into Anderson's hands through Merriam, whom he called "a busy-body little guy;"

that it was obvious Anderson had the original memo and not a copy, and "it had to come from Merriam."

Wilson was quoted as describing what he called a plot by Merriam and Gerrity to get Mrs. Beard fired because she had access to Geneen that they did not.

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.

Praised Lobbyist

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, Mss. Beard said she had never written the memo as it appeared in Anderson's column.

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 Found

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 Anderson."