

Tunney Raises an ITT Perjury Issue

Washington

Senator John V. Tunney of California charged yesterday that a newspaper interview with Representative Bob Wilson (Rep-Calif.) indicates that three officials of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. may have committed perjury before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

His allegation came as the judiciary committee agreed to vote by noon today on a compromise plan to hold nine more days of hearings in its five-week-long investigation into the qualifications of Richard G. Kleindienst to be confirmed as attorney general. The committee tentatively approved a list of at least 17 more witnesses who will be heard between now and April 20, if time permits.

TRANSCRIPT

Tunney released what he said was the full transcript of a taped interview that Wilson gave a San Diego newsman on March 3.

In it, Wilson quoted Dita Beard, ITT's Washington lobbyist, as saying that she wrote the memorandum that was published by columnist Jack Anderson and which touched off the judiciary committee's inquiry into the Justice Department's settlement of three antitrust cases against ITT. Mrs. Beard testified that the Anderson memorandum was a forgery.

Wilson also said in the interview that W. R. Merriam, head of ITT's Washington office, had said that he received the memorandum from Mrs. Beard. Merriam has told the judiciary committee in a sworn affidavit that he never received such a document.

GENEEN

Wilson, who represents most of the San Diego area, also quoted Harold S. Geneen, president of ITT, as guaranteeing to underwrite up to \$400,000 of the expenses for the 1972 Republican National Convention in San Diego. Geneen swore in his testimony that his company's commitment was only \$200,000.

"There is a possibility, if Wilson's statement is correct, of three counts of perjury," Tunney said — one each against Mrs. Beard, Merriam and Geneen.

The interview was taped by Robert E. Cox, a reporter for the San Diego Union, on March 3. The newspaper published some of the information at the time, but did

not print the full substance of the three items mentioned by Tunney until yesterday.

Gene Gregston, editor of the Union, said that these statements by Wilson did not appear important until subsequent apparently inconsistent sworn statements were given to the judiciary committee.

MEMO

The memorandum purportedly written by Mrs. Beard that was published by Anderson linked ITT's "no-

ble commitment" of about \$400,000 to hopes for a favorable settlement of the three antitrust suits. The memorandum was dated June 25. The suits were settled on July 31.

In the interview, Wilson quoted Mrs. Beard as saying she wrote the memorandum at the request of Merriam, who insisted that he didn't understand the details of ITT's commitment and said, "Put it in writing so I'll understand it."

Wilson continued: "And 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 the copy, but the original memo.'"

Wilson added that Merriam came to his office on February 28 and said, "I did get that memo," but "I'm sure I gave it back to Dita." Wilson then said: "ITT puts out the story that nobody ever saw it... the hell they didn't."

THEORY

Wilson asserted in the interview that the memorandum "had to come from Merriam" to Anderson, and that Edward J. Gerrity, ITT's vice president for public relations, was "the Svengali who got Merriam to do this."

The congressman's theory was that they were jealous of Mrs. Beard because of her influence with Geneen, and they arranged publication of the memorandum "to get rid of Dita and the thing blew up in their face."

Wilson issued a brief statement yesterday which confirmed that he was interviewed by Cox, and did not deny the authenticity of the transcript. He asserted he did not say in the interview or elsewhere that there was link between the settlement of the antitrust cases and the guarantee by ITT's Sheraton Hotel division to underwrite the convention expenses.